



## Whatcom County Housing Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes

**Meeting Date/Time/Location:** April 9, 2020 8:30 AM to 9:00 AM – Virtual via GoToMeeting

**WCHAC Members Present:** Anne Deacon, Kyle Christensen, Michael Jones, Emily O’Connor, Michael Parker, Debbie Paton, Paul Schissler, Brien Thane, Marc Walker Late Arrivals: Samya Lutz, Hadrian Starr

**WCHAC Members Absent:** Karen Burke, Diana Phair, Satpal Sidhu, Tara Sundin,

**Whatcom Co. Health Dept. Staff/Guests:** Barbara Johnson-Vinna, Human Services Housing Specialist; Tammy Axlund, Office Coordinator  
Guests: Teri Bryant, Amanda Hubik, Ryley Sweeney, Greg Winter,

Agenda Item	Discussion	Action/Who
<b>A. Call to order, introductions</b>	Introductions commenced and quorum present.	<b>Debbie Paton</b>
<b>B. Agenda Review</b>	No Changes	
<b>C. Public Comment</b>	No public comment	
<b>D. Reports/Discussion</b>  A. <i>Commerce Grant</i>	<p>Commerce awarded Grant money to every county in the state with the express purpose to slow the spread of the COVID-19 virus. Eligible activities could be to expand or relocate shelters for social distancing or create isolation or quarantine activities for those who could not do this themselves. Funds can be used for capital to build, purchase, lease, or for operations</p> <p>1. Whatcom Unified Command (WUC) relocated the Lighthouse Mission Drop-in Center to Bellingham High School to alleviate an immediate threat to Public Health that would overwhelm the healthcare system. The school district needs the school back by August 10<sup>th</sup>.</p> <p>2. Motel 6 is almost vacant and will be used for quarantine and isolation - isolation for those who tested positive, but don't need medical care, and quarantine for those who have had contact with someone who tested positive, but may not have symptoms.</p> <p>We used the full amount of \$905,821. Anne will send a plan and budget to the Department of Commerce to ask for more, but there are no promises. WUC is also working with FEMA to ask for funds for unmet costs</p>	<b>Anne</b>



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<p>B. 1406 Funding Allocation Plan</p>	<p>Anne reminded the group that through the credit against state sales tax we expected to receive up to \$680K per year which can be used for capital or rental assistance. As a result of people staying home because of the COVID-19 pandemic, we don't know how much sales tax will come in. The County Executive has asked that we reconsider the plan for these dollars and dedicate as much as possible to rental assistance for those who would lose their housing without it. Many in our community have currently lost jobs. Though there are some sources of assistance such as the individual federal stimulus and State unemployment, many will not be able to pay their rent.</p> <p>County Council has given us spending authority for \$400K this year. Assuming we have \$28K per month to spend, it will serve between 25 and 40 households. These funds are not to be used for administrative costs. The County can manage our administrative costs, but it may be less manageable for other partners involved, such as the Opportunity Council.</p> <p>The board supports using the funds for rental assistance for the next two or three months to help people through the crisis and reduce long term effects. They would like to revisit this issue in a few months and consider making a new recommendation, especially if we get more federal and state funds for rental assistance. We will keep this on the agenda and bring updates as to how many households are served and what new funding has come into the community.</p> <p>In order to assist those who are month to month, and those who have a lease, we would consider up to \$1000 a month, a month at a time, with a 3 month cap. We will confirm income and job loss to ensure the money to goes to those who truly have need.</p> <p>While supportive of immediate use for rental assistance, some want to design a process to get bricks and mortar projects identified to build. These take two or three years to build and projects can better get matching funds if promised some local money. We need to look for other funding streams such as the Community Development Block Grant program CDBG, and the possibility of new unexpected money. Anne noted that the Health Department is engulfed in COVID-19 response and can't really get those conversations started. We are fine with others starting these conversations.</p> <p>Michael motioned that the majority of the 1406 funds budgeted for the next three months, go to rental assistance. Mike Parker seconded the motion. The committee voted and the motion passed.</p>	<p>Anne</p> <p><b>Ayes: 11</b> <b>Abstain: 0</b> <b>Motion Passed</b></p>

**WHATCOM COUNTY**  
Health Department



**Erika Lautenbach, Director**  
**Greg Stern, M.D., Health Officer**

Agenda Item	Discussion	Action/Who
	<p>We will continue to collect data and report back on the pandemic and other resources coming to the community and try to preserve funds to greatest extent we can for the future.</p> <p>There was a shout out to the Health Department for all their work and long hours.</p>	
<b>E. ADJOURN</b>	Adjourned at 9:02 a.m.	<b>Debbie Paton</b>
<i>NEXT MEETING</i>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Next regular meeting June 11<sup>th</sup>, 2020, 8:30 – 10:00 a.m.</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>NEW LOCATION</u></b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>WECU Education Center</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>511 E Holly St</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Bellingham, Washington</b></p>	